



MEMORANDUM

Date: July 16, 2012
To: Ethan Nelson, Building & Permit Services (x 5224)
From: Stephanie Scafa, Zero Waste Analyst (x5652)
Subject: Plastic Bag Ban Survey Summary

PURPOSE

This analysis provides an overview of public input received during the survey period (June 18 – July 11, 2012) for the plastic bag ban. The goal of the survey was to collect public input that could help inform an ordinance to increase the use of reusable bags by prohibiting the use of single-use plastic carryout bags.

BACKGROUND

Two surveys—one for consumers and one for retailers—were developed to gather information and opinions from community members and retailers on the use of single-use plastic carryout bags. The surveys were developed online using the Survey Monkey tool and “went live” on June 18, 2012. Alternative formats and hardcopy versions of the survey were also available. Both surveys remained open until midnight on July 11.

During the week of June 18 a press release went out to all local news sources to help promote the survey and encourage participation. As a result, city staff were interviewed by KLCC, KEZI, KMTR, KVAL, the Register-Guard, and Jefferson Public Radio regarding the intention of both survey tools. Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce emailed the retail survey link to 200 local retailers and included information about the survey in an email newsletter that goes to over 2,000 businesses. In the weeks that followed, city staff fielded phone calls and emails from the public and from retailers that had questions about the ban.

Consumer Survey

The consumer survey had nine questions (see Attachment A) asking for the public’s opinions on the use of single-use plastic carryout bags. A total of 2,076 people responded to the consumer survey. Of those, 2,048 (98.7%) completed the survey.

Retailer Survey

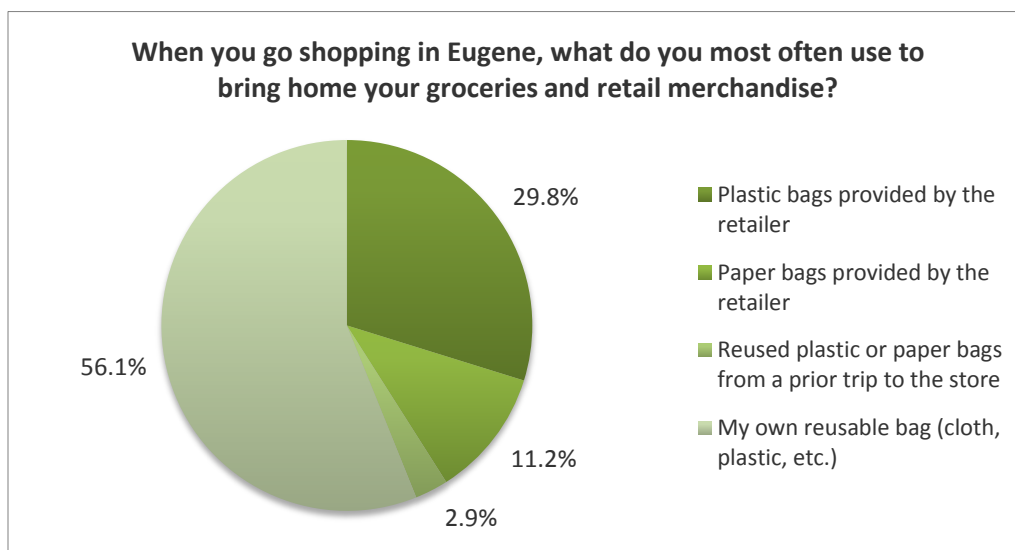
The retailer survey had eleven questions (see Attachment B) asking for the retailers’ opinions on the usage of single-use plastic carryout bags. A total of 83 retailers responded to the retail survey. Of those, 61 (73.5%) completed the survey.

CONSUMER SURVEY ANALYSIS

This analysis reflects the quantitative data received through the survey tool with a generalized qualitative analysis based on text responses (if the question included a text response option). All text responses will be available in a separate document. The analysis goes through each question asked in the survey, provides a table or chart to show the breakdown of survey responses (if applicable), and then follows with a short summary of text responses received.

1. When you go shopping in Eugene, what do you most often use to bring home your groceries and retail merchandise?

The majority of respondents (1,129) stated that they most often bring their own reusable bag to a store to bring home groceries and retail merchandise:



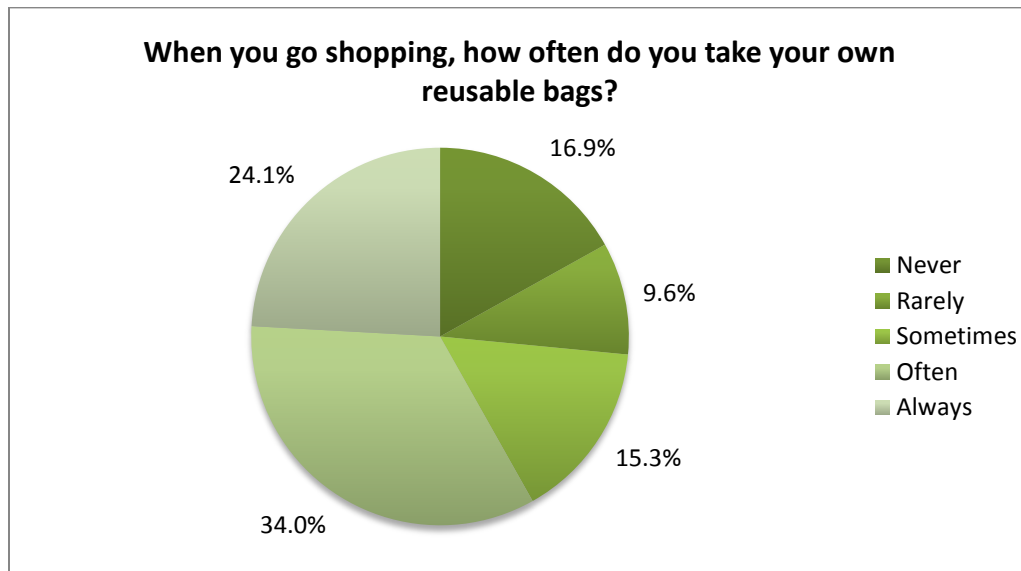
This question did not allow for respondents to choose more than one answer; many of the text responses reflect this and give an explanation of what people do with the bags they reuse or explain how they get their groceries home. Based on survey responses, many of the respondents often use multiple methods to carry groceries home; often a combination of the choices listed above.

2. When you go shopping in Eugene, how often do you use a single-use plastic carryout bag provided by the retailer?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Never	13.2%	272
Rarely	33.5%	692
Sometimes	23.0%	474
Often	16.6%	342
Always	13.7%	283
<i>answered question</i>		2063
<i>skipped question</i>		13

3. When you go shopping, how often do you take your own reusable bags?

The respondents indicated that 58.1% of them often or always take their own reusable bag:



4. What prevents you from using (and reusing) a REUSABLE bag?

Based on these survey results, there are many reasons that could prevent someone from using and reusing a reusable bag:

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Don't have any reusable bags	2.4%	46
Forget reusable bags at home or in vehicle	51.4%	974
Reusable bags are not clean	10.8%	204
Reusable bags are too expensive	3.4%	65
Nothing	32.0%	606
Other (please specify)		278
<i>answered question</i>		1895
<i>skipped question</i>		181

Aside from forgetting reusable bags at home or in a vehicle, many people expressed that they reuse their plastic bags for a variety of different uses including picking up pet waste, using them in trash cans, and for convenience. The survey did not allow for the respondent to check all of the reasons that prevent them from using and reusing reusable bags; there are many comments that can be read regarding what prevents people from using reusable bags in the separate text document.

5. Please describe what you do with single-use plastic carryout bags you receive.

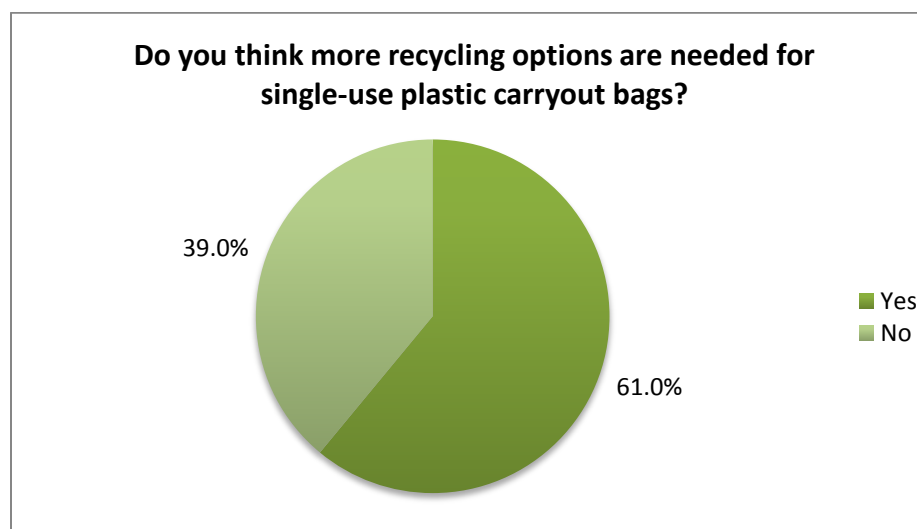
Answer Options	All	Most	Many	Some	Few	None	Response Count
Reuse then recycle	449	395	122	147	110	143	1366
Reuse then throw away	305	359	129	179	243	115	1330
Recycle	253	256	117	147	121	167	1061
Throw away	35	50	27	119	335	308	874
Other (please specify)							299
answered question							1979
skipped question							97

6. Where do you currently recycle your single-use plastic carryout bags?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Retail or grocery stores	54.0%	1002
International Paper (IP) plastic bag collection site	2.7%	50
At one (or more) of the 16 Lane County transfer stations	14.1%	261
Don't recycle plastic carryout bags	29.2%	542
Other (please specify)		271
<i>answered question</i>		1855
<i>skipped question</i>		221

The majority of the text responses for this question describe where the respondents take their bags to be recycled (see separate text document).

7. Do you think more recycling options are needed for single-use plastic carryout bags?



8. Do you live in the City of Eugene?

The majority of people that took the survey live in the City of Eugene. Most other respondents live in Springfield and in surrounding areas within the Lane County:

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	81.2%	1643
No	18.7%	379
I don't know	0.1%	2
If you do not live in Eugene, please tell us where you live:		353
<i>answered question</i>		2024
<i>skipped question</i>		52

9. Please provide any additional comments here.

The final question in the survey asked respondents to provide any additional comments or information they felt necessary. Roughly half (50.4%) of the total participants provided feedback. Although the majority of survey respondents appear to be in favor of the ban, there were also concerns expressed by respondents that say they need plastic bags; namely, reusable bags are expensive and not readily available.

RETAILER SURVEY ANALYSIS

This analysis reflects the quantitative data received through the retailer survey tool with a generalized qualitative analysis based on text responses (if the question included a text response option). All text responses will be available in a separate document. The analysis goes through each question asked in the survey, provides by a table or chart to show the breakdown of survey responses (if applicable), and then follows with a short summary of text responses received.

1. What types of single-use plastic carryout bags do you currently offer to your customers at checkout?

Although this table shows the majority of retailer respondents to primarily use plastic bags, 10 respondents wrote in that they use BOTH paper and plastic bags, or another type of carryout source (such as cardboard boxes). This is not reflected in the results because respondents were allowed to check only one box in the survey.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Paper	24.4%	19
Plastic	60.3%	47
None	15.4%	12
Other (please specify)		12
<i>answered question</i>		78
<i>skipped question</i>		5

2. Do your employees ask customers whether they would like a single-use plastic carryout bag?



3. What percentage of your customers decline a single-use plastic carryout bag?

When asked what percentage of customers decline a single-use plastic carryout bag, seven respondents stated that their stores do not carry plastic bags and were therefore not applicable. This chart depicts a breakdown of the percentage of customers that decline a single-use plastic carryout bag at the point of sale:

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
0-10%	30.6%	22
11-20%	12.5%	9
21-30%	11.1%	8
31-40%	5.6%	4
41-50%	5.6%	4
51-60%	2.8%	2
61-70%	1.4%	1
71-80%	5.6%	4
81-90%	5.6%	4
91-100%	2.8%	2
Unknown	16.7%	12
Other (please specify)		11
<i>answered question</i>		72
<i>skipped question</i>		11

4. What thickness in millimeters (mils) are the single-use plastic carryout bags you provide to customers at checkout?

This table shows a breakdown of plastic bag thickness (in millimeters) provided to customers at point of sale:

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
0.0 - 1.0 mils	9.4%	6
1.1 - 2.0 mils	21.9%	14
2.1 - 2.24 mils	1.6%	1
2.25+ mils	4.7%	3
Don't know	31.3%	20
Don't offer plastic bags	31.3%	20
<i>answered question</i>		64
<i>skipped question</i>		19

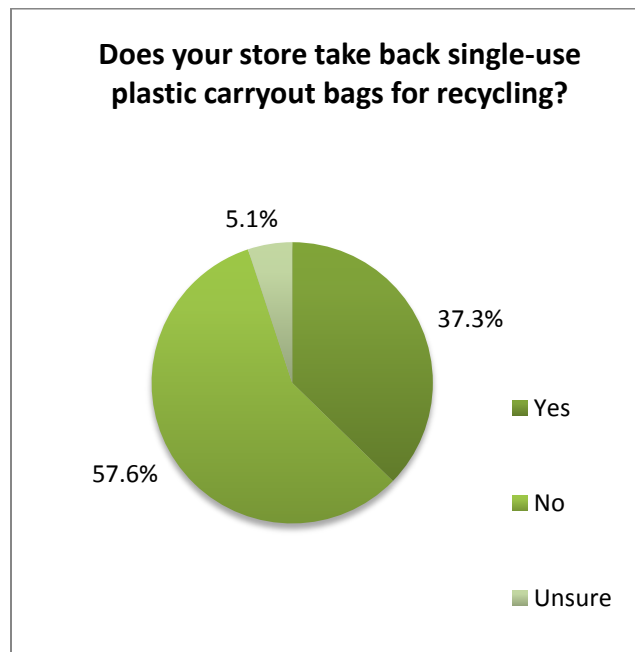
5. Approximately how many single-use plastic carryout bags does your store provide to customers in a year?

Forty-three respondents answered this write-in question. Answers ranged from “Unsure” (seven respondents) to “Not Applicable” (two respondents) to specific numbers: zero (eight respondents); from 500 to 4 million; most responses were in the 10,000 to 50,000 range.

6. If single-use plastic carryout bags were banned, describe any impacts to your business:

Forty-nine respondents provided information on this open-ended question. Eleven respondents said that a ban on plastic bags would drive up their costs; 16 respondents said a ban on single-use plastic carryout bags would have little or no effect on their business. These responses were greatly mixed – some retailers are clearly for or against a ban; half of the survey participants chose not to respond to this question.

7. Does your store take back single-use plastic carryout bags for recycling?



8. If your store does not take back single-use plastic carryout bags for recycling, why? (Please check all that apply).

Of those that do not take back plastic bags, we asked why and received a range of answers shown below. Additionally, 13 respondents wrote in to answer this question as well. Of those 13, eight stated that they do not give out plastic bags so therefore they do not recycle them. Another retailer wrote that there is no incentive to recycle plastic bags so people choose not to do it; another retailer wrote that experience with customer recycling was inconsistent.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Never thought about it	30.0%	9
Don't know how	20.0%	6
Don't have the resources	23.3%	7
Don't want to	26.7%	8
Other (please specify)		13
<i>answered question</i>		30
<i>skipped question</i>		53

9. What type of retail store do you operate?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Grocery/Supermarket	24.0%	12
Department	4.0%	2
Convenience	2.0%	1
Hardware/home improvement	8.0%	4
Bakery	2.0%	1
Restaurant	10.0%	5
Clothing	0.0%	0
Specialty	42.0%	21
General/Retail	8.0%	4
Other (please specify)		14
<i>answered question</i>		50
<i>skipped question</i>		33

10. How many full-time employee equivalents (FTEs) does your Eugene store(s) employ?

A total of 56 participants answered this question and responses ranged from zero employees to 400. About 47 of the responses came from retailers with 0-50 employees, two stores state that they have 51-100 employees, three stores state that they have 100-200 employees, and two stores state that they have over 201 employees.

11. Please provide any additional comments here.

The final question in the survey asked participants to provide any additional comments they had. Out of the 83 respondents, 19 answered this question. Answers ranged from whether or not the retailer supports a ban on plastic bags. All text responses can be viewed in the accompanying document.

ATTACHMENT A

City of Eugene Community Plastic Bag Survey

Greetings! In order to reduce waste and promote the use of reusable bags, the Eugene City Council is currently considering a city-wide ban on single-use plastic carryout bags. You can learn more about this issue and review a proposed ordinance located at: www.eugene-or.gov/plasticbags. City staff is collecting input from consumers and business owners to provide to the council on Monday, July 23. This consumer survey should take 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Thank you for taking the time to fill it out!

1. When you go shopping in Eugene, what do you most often use to bring home your groceries and retail merchandise?
 - a. Plastic bags provided by the retailer
 - b. Paper bags provided by the retailer
 - c. Reused plastic or paper bags from a prior trip to the store
 - d. My own reusable bag (cloth, plastic, etc.)
 - e. Other (please specify):
2. When you go shopping in Eugene, how often do you use a single-use plastic carryout bag provided by the retailer?
 - a. Never
 - b. Rarely
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Often
 - e. Always
3. When you go shopping, how often do you take your own reusable bags?
 - a. Never
 - b. Rarely
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Often
 - e. Always
4. What prevents you from using (and reusing) a REUSABLE bag? Please check all that apply:
 - a. Don't have any reusable bags
 - b. Forget reusable bags at home or in vehicle
 - c. Reusable bags are not clean
 - d. Reusable bags are too expensive
 - e. Nothing
 - f. Other (please specify):
5. Please describe what you do with single-use plastic carryout bags you receive:
 - a. Reuse then recycle: All Most Many Some Few None
 - b. Reuse then throw away: All Most Many Some Few None

- c. Recycle: All Most Many Some Few None
 - d. Throw away: All Most Many Some Few None
 - e. Other (please specify):
6. Where do you currently recycle your single-use plastic carryout bags? (Select all that apply):
- a. Retail or grocery stores
 - b. International Paper (IP) plastic bag collection site
 - c. At one (or more) of the 16 Lane County transfer stations
 - d. Don't recycle plastic carryout bags
 - e. Other (please specify):
7. Do you think more recycling options are needed for single-use plastic carryout bags?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Please explain: (open ended)
8. Do you live in the City of Eugene?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I don't know
 - d. If 'No', please tell us where you live:
9. Please provide any additional comments here:

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey! Your answers will help to inform City Council on the best course of action to take regarding this issue. For more information, please visit: www.eugene-or.gov/plasticbags

ATTACHMENT B

City of Eugene Retailer Plastic Bag Survey

Greetings! In order to reduce waste and promote the use of reusable bags, the Eugene City Council is currently considering a city-wide ban on single-use plastic carryout bags. You can learn more about this issue and review a proposed ordinance located at: www.eugene-or.gov/plasticbags. City staff is collecting input from consumers and retailers to provide to the council on Monday, July 23. This survey for retailers, should take 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Thank you for taking the time to fill it out!

1. What types of single-use plastic carryout bags do you currently offer to your customers at checkout? (select all that apply)
 - a. Paper
 - b. Plastic
 - c. None
 - d. Other (please specify):
2. Do your employees ask customers whether they would like a single-use plastic carryout bag?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Unsure
 - d. Other (please specify):
3. What percentage of your customers decline a single-use plastic carryout bag?
 - a. 0-10%
 - b. 11-20%
 - c. 21-30%
 - d. 31-40%
 - e. 41-50%
 - f. 51-60%
 - g. 61-70%
 - h. 71-80%
 - i. 81-90%
 - j. 91-100%
 - k. Unknown
4. What thickness in millimeters (mils) are the single-use plastic carryout bags you provide to customers at checkout? (Please select all that apply):
 - a. 0.0 - 1.0 mils
 - b. 1.1 - 2.0 mils
 - c. 2.1 - 2.24 mils
 - d. 2.25+ mils
 - e. Don't know
 - f. Don't offer plastic bags

5. Approximately how many single-use plastic carryout bags does your store provide to customers in a year? (Open-ended)
6. If single-use plastic carryout bags were banned, describe any impacts to your business (open-ended):
7. Does your store take back single-use plastic carryout bags for recycling?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Other (please explain):
8. If your store does not take back single-use plastic carryout bags for recycling, why? (Please check all that apply):
 - a. Never thought about it
 - b. Don't know how
 - c. Don't have the resources
 - d. Don't want to
 - e. Other (please specify):
9. What type of retail store do you operate?
 - a. Grocery/Supermarket
 - b. Department
 - c. Convenience
 - d. Hardware/home improvement
 - e. Bakery
 - f. Restaurant
 - g. Clothing
 - h. Specialty
 - i. General/Retail
 - j. Other (please specify):
10. How many full-time employee equivalents (FTEs) does your Eugene store(s) employ?
11. Please provide any additional comments here:

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey! Your answers will help to inform City Council on the best course of action to take regarding this issue. For more information, please visit: www.eugene-or.gov/plasticbags.